

CHRIST In The Psalms

by

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*All things must be fulfilled, which were written . . .
in the Psalms concerning me" (Luke 24:44)*

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The One-Hundred-And-Eighteenth Psalm

**"The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner"
(Matthew 22:42).**

Psalms 118

- 1. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: because his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 2. Let Israel now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 3. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 4. Let them now that fear the Lord say, that his mercy endureth for ever.**
- 5. I called upon the Lord in distress: the Lord answered me, and set me in a large place.**
- 6. The Lord is on my side; I will not fear: what can man do unto me?**
- 7. The Lord taketh my part with them that help me: therefore shall I see my desire upon them that hate me.**
- 8. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.**
- 9. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes.**
- 10. All nations compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord will I destroy them.**
- 11. They compassed me about; yea, they compassed me about: but in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.**
- 12. They compassed me about like bees: they are quenched as the fire of thorns: for in the name of the Lord I will destroy them.**
- 13. Thou hast thrust sore at me that I might fall: but the Lord helped me.**
- 14. The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation.**
- 15. The voice of rejoicing and salvation is in the tabernacles of the righteous: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.**
- 16. The right hand of the Lord is exalted: the right hand of the Lord doeth valiantly.**
- 17. I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord.**

18. **The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death.**
19. **Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord:**
20. **This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter.**
21. **I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation.**
22. **The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.**
23. **This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.**
24. **This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it.**
25. **Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord: O Lord, I beseech thee, send now prosperity.**
26. **Blessed be he that cometh in the name of the Lord: we have blessed you out of the house of the Lord.**
27. **God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar.**
28. **Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee.**
29. **O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.**

We come now to the last of the Messianic Psalms according to the test we have laid down in this series of studies. It is the last of the Psalms to be quoted in the New Testament and applied to our LORD JESUS the Messiah or CHRIST.

It is also the last of the Hallel Psalms, of which there were six, and which are repeated by the Jews at their festivals. They are Psalms 113 to 118 inclusive. This Psalm also forms a part of the Haggadah, that is, the prayer for Passover night. It is more than likely that this is the hymn which was sung by our LORD JESUS and His disciples at the first LORD's Supper: **"And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives"** (Matthew 26:30).

Nobody knows who wrote this Psalm or when it was written. Its authorship has been ascribed to David and to Hezekiah. Some writers believe that David wrote it when he became king over Israel and conquered the surrounding nations (II Sam. 7:1, 8-10). Others believe that Hezekiah wrote it at the time he was restored from sickness (II Kings 20:1-11).

It is supposed by some that it was sung at the first celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles after the return from Babylon (Ezra 3:1-4). Others believe that it was sung at the laying of the foundation of the second temple (Ezra 6:15-18); or, at the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles after the rebuilding of the second temple (Nehemiah 8:13-18). It seems very probably that in the celebration recorded in Ezra 3 this Psalm was sung, for in that chapter we read that **"when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the son of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel. And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his lovingkindness endureth for ever toward Israel"** (Ezra 3:10-11). The clause, **"they sang together by course,"** really refers to their singing responsively or antiphonally; and the 118th Psalm seems to be indicated by the words, **"after the ordinance of David king of Israel,"** remind us of I Chronicles 16:1, 34-35, and they may indicate that David wrote this Psalm in and set in the midst of the tent that David had pitched for it.

The Hallel Psalms are still used in the Haggadah, which is the order of service for the Passover night and the first two days of the Passover season, and also the Feast of Weeks or Pentecost, the

Feast of Tabernacles, and the Feast of Chanuca, or Dedication. The Hallel is never used in a home of mourning, but is usually connected by the Jews with joy. During the Feast, which is called Hosanna Rabba, on the Great Hosanna Day, the Jews walk around the aisles of the synagogue bearing palm branches, myrtle twigs and willow sprigs, singing the 25th verse of this Psalm, **"Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord."** which in the Hebrew tongue is, *Hoshiahna*. This was done in obedience to the command of Leviticus 23:40, **"And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the Lord your God seven days."**

It was a part of this Psalm which was sung by the multitude greeting the LORD JESUS on the day when He presented Himself as King of Israel. The people **"spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way. And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest"** (Matthew 21:8-9). The word for "Hosanna" reads in Psalm 118:25, "Save now," and "send now prosperity."

We may well think of this Psalm as the song in our LORD's own heart as He set His face steadfastly toward the Cross. His death on Calvary's tree might to others look like defeat, but He knew that it led to triumph. **"I shall not die, but live, and declare the works of the Lord. The Lord hath chastened me sore: but he hath not given me over unto death"** (Psalm 118:17-18).

He was opening the way into GOD's presence. Indeed, He Himself was the way, and in order to be the Way, He must go to the Cross as our Passover, to be sacrificed for us. How willingly He went! Hear Him sing: **"Open to me the gates of righteousness: I will go into them, and I will praise the Lord: This gate of the Lord, into which the righteous shall enter"** (Psalm 118:19-20). He is the Gate, He is the Way, He is the Door. The Cross was indeed the gate of the LORD, and those who should take their place under the shed blood of Calvary should thus be constituted righteous, and they, too, should be conducted into GOD's presence.

"I will praise thee: for thou hast heard me, and art become my salvation. The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes" (Psalm 118:21-23). In the parable of the vineyard recorded in Matthew 21:33-46; Mark 12:1-12; and Luke 20:9-18, our LORD claimed this 22nd verse as applying to Him. He is the Stone rejected of the builders which has become the HEAD of the corner.

There is a legend that in the building of the temple a peculiarly shaped stone came up from the quarry without any marks of identification upon it, and the builders did not know where to place it. Finally, they cast it aside and it was lost in a heap of rubbish. But when they came to the top stone at the top of the building they could find no stone to fit into that place until some one remembered the stone which they had rejected. This was hunted up and brought forth from the heap of rubbish and brought to the place where it fitted perfectly. So our LORD JESUS is rejected and despised of men, but chosen of GOD, and precious, and He is both the Foundation and the Headstone of the Church, which is the body of CHRIST and the habitation of GOD: **"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all . . . Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ**

himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22).

It is to this "living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious," that we have come, and upon this Foundation we, "as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (I Pet. 2:4-8).

Our LORD JESUS CHRIST is the Rock of Ages, and as some one has said, It is better to know the Rock of Ages than to know the age of the rocks, "CHRIST crucified is the ROCK:

(1) Smitten that the SPIRIT of life may flow from Him to all who will drink.

"Behold, I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb; and thou shalt smite the rock, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink. And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel" (Exodus 17:6).

"And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ" (I Corinthians 10:4).

"Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13-14).

"In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive: for the Holy Ghost was not yet given; because that Jesus was not yet glorified.)" (John 7:37-39).

(2) To the church the foundation and chief corner Stone:

"And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone" (Ephesians 2:20).

(3) To the Jews at His first coming a 'stumbling stone'.

"Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone; As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be

ashamed" (Romans 9:32-33).

"But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness" (I Corinthians 1:23).

(4) To Israel at His second coming the 'headstone of the corner':

"Who art thou, O great mountain? before Zerubbabel thou shalt become a plain: and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it" (Zechariah 4:7).

(5) To the Gentile World-power the smiting 'stone cut out without hands':

"Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces" (Daniel 2:34).

(6) In the divine purpose the Stone which, after the destruction of Gentile world-power, is to grow and fill the earth.

(7) To unbelievers the crushing Stone of judgment:

"And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder" (Matthew 21:44).

- Scofield Reference Bible.

In verse 27 our LORD is saying: **"God is the Lord, which hath shewed us light: bind the sacrifice with cords, even unto the horns of the altar."** He willingly gave Himself to the altar of sacrifice that we might live. He did it willingly, He did it gladly, He did it with rejoicing! He said: **"Thou art my God, and I will praise thee: thou art my God, I will exalt thee. O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."**

And all this was because of the great love wherewith He loved us when we were dead:

"And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)" (Ephesians 2:1-5).

This was the joy that was set before Him, the joy of bringing many sons unto glory:

"For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10).

which made Him willing and eager to endure the Cross, despising the shame:

"Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God" (Hebrews 12:2).

By His death we were delivered from death, and by His life we live!

Blessed be His holy name for ever!

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